knote DB **209** with the PIM data. One such data synchronization software includes an Intellisync product from Puma Technology Inc., which is capable of synchronizing data between different files and databases.

In one embodiment, synchronization may also be performed periodically (e.g., every 10 to 15 minutes) while the operating system **400** is running. The duration between updates may be set by a user or it may be based on other settings, such as the power source of the system **10** (e.g., battery or alternating current source in a mobile or notebook computer).

By default, the WQN applet **402** may store the most recently entered information (e.g., information entered in the last week or month) in the Quicknote DB **209**. This may reduce the amount of information that has to be maintained in the Quicknote environment. Alternatively, the Quicknote DB **209** may include all of the information maintained by a PIM application. In one embodiment, the WQN applet **402** may present an interface through which a user may select the information from the PIM data that is to be kept in the Quicknote DB **209**.

Software or firmware, including applications, operating system modules or routines, device drivers, BIOS modules or routines, and other routines or modules, may be stored or otherwise tangibly embodied in one or more storage media in the system **10**.

Storage media suitable for tangibly embodying software and firmware instructions may include different forms of memory including semiconductor memory devices such as dynamic or static random access memories, erasable and programmable read-only memories (EPROMs), electrically erasable and programmable read-only memories (EEPROMs), and flash memories; magnetic disks such as fixed, floppy and removable disks; other magnetic media including tape; and optical media such as CD or DVD disks. The instructions stored in the storage media when executed cause the system **10** to perform programmed acts.

The software or firmware can be loaded into the system **10** in one of many different ways. For example, instructions or other code segments stored on storage media or transported through a network interface card, modem, or other interface mechanism may be loaded into the system **10** and executed to perform programmed acts. In the loading or transport process, data signals that are embodied as carrier waves (transmitted over telephone lines, network lines, wireless links, cables and the like) may communicate the instructions or code segments to the system **10**.

Advantages offered by some embodiments of the invention may include one or more of the following. Quicker access is provided to predetermined information and features since a full-feature operating system does not need to be loaded. This may be convenient when a user needs to retrieve a phone number from a system to make a phone call, or to make notes or add information to a calendar or address list. Flexibility is provided since a user has access to both a full-feature environment as well as to an alternative environment that provides quicker access to information and features in one system.

While the invention has been disclosed with respect to a limited number of embodiments, those skilled in the art will appreciate numerous modifications and variations therefrom. It is intended that the appended claims cover all such modifications and variations as fall within the true spirit and scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for use in a system, comprising:

providing at least one operating system;

receiving an indication to provide a predefined operating environment without loading any operating system;

running a routine in the predefined operating environment without loading any operating system in response to the indication; and

receiving, under control of the routine, requests to access information contained in a storage medium in the system.

2. The method of claim **1**, further comprising:

receiving one other indication to load the at least one operating system; and

loading the at least one operating system in response to the one other indication.

3. The method of claim **2**, further comprising booting the at least one operating system in response to the one other indication and the system starting from a powered off state.

4. The method of claim **2**, further comprising resuming the at least one operating system in response to the one other indication and the system starting from a low power state in which system context information has been saved to a non-volatile storage medium.

5. The method of claim **1**, further comprising accessing a first set of information under control of the routine.

6. The method of claim **5**, further comprising running an application in a second operating environment provided by the at least one operating system to access a second set of information.

7. The method of claim **6**, further comprising synchronizing the first and second sets of information.

8. A system comprising:

at least one operating system; and

a first routine adapted to selectively load the at least one operating system or to cause provision of a predefined operating environment without loading any operating system, the predefined operating environment to present an interface through which a user may access predetermined information, the first routine adapted to transition the system from the predefined operating environment to an off state without loading any operating system.

9. The system of claim **8**, further comprising:

a storage medium to store the predetermined information; and

a second routine invocable by the first routine to provide the predetermined operating environment to allow access to the predetermined information.

10. The system of claim **8**, further comprising an application capable of running under the at least one operating system to manage access to a second set of information, wherein the predetermined information is at least a subset of the second set of information.

11. The system of claim **10**, wherein the application includes a personal information management application.

12. The system of claim **10**, further comprising a synchronization routine to synchronize the predetermined information with the second set of information.

13. The system of claim **8**, wherein the first routine includes a basic input/output system routine.

14. The system of claim **8**, wherein the off state includes a powered off state.

15. The system of claim **8**, wherein the off state includes a low power state.